



MARCH 2005 Issue 2

SIGHTHILL SAVE OUR HOMES!

SSOH c/o Flat 15/1, 32 Pinkston Drive, G21 1NG Email: sighthillsoh@hotmail.com Mobile: 07940 937 241

Welcome to Issue 2 of Sighthill Save Our Homes! (SSOH) Newsletter. Since June 2004 our residents' action group kept you informed & empowered about demolition despite no real information coming from GHA. SSOH! is part of the Glasgow-wide network of local tenant-led SOH! Campaigns. We support the setting up a Scottish Defend Council

TENANTS QUESTION TIME:

7.30pm THURS. MARCH 24th 2005

SIGHTHILL PRIMARY SCHOOL, FOUNTAINWELL TERR. G21

MODERATOR: Graham Campbell (Sighthill SOH) PANEL: Paul Martin (Labour MSP) Tommy Sheridan (SSP MSP) Sandra White (SNP MSP); Sean Clerkin (Glasgow Campaign Against Housing Stock Transfer), Flaine Ellis (Sighthill resident), Ian Thønhald (GHA Press Invited).

PETITION:

We want to thank most sincerely the good people of Sighthill. Their help with our petition has been invaluable. Firstly the friends who took the petitions into their premises. Secondly the thinking people who signed the petition. As

SIGHTHILL GIVES



GHA ROASTING

RED ROAD BOMBSHELL

IS SIGHTHILL NEXT?

At a 23rd Floor press conference on March 9th, GHA officials joined by Council leader Charles Gordon, Baillie Allan Stewart and Springburn MSP Paul Martin; triumphantly announced the imminent demolition of the entire Red Road scheme by 2015. The first slab block 153, 183, 213 Petershill Drive (with 360 flats) and 96 tenements are to be demolished in 18 months displacing 207 tenants whose re-housing "will take around 2 years. A "final decision on the others to take place later as part of 'regeneration'. (GHA Press release & John Egan)

Glasgow - a serial victim of planners' arrogant 'regeneration' schemes - will get more of the same as politicians boasted of the new Red Road emerging. **GHA said that all 1,257 flats are to come down bit by bit, and be replaced by around 600 low rise new builds (75% of which will be for sale!) over ten years.** Red Road tenants weren't invited. Most saw or heard the announcement on TV or radio or read it in the Evening Times. Most only received their GHA letters by hand that morning! About 100 tenements will be refurbished - though GHA admit they too may come down. **This means that only around 300 units will remain for social rented housing. Two-thirds of Red Road's people will be displaced. BUT TO WHERE?**

Red Road SOH campaigner Mark McBay was astonished by the GHA's approach. Tenants have simply not been consulted nor kept properly informed by the Local Housing Organisations (Red Road LHO

30 tenants and residents at SOH's October 25th Tenants Question Time at St Kevin's School bombarded GHA Housing Manager Bob Maguire with questions on the lack of repairs; maintenance, investment and information. Mr. Maguire denied GHA were to bulldoze Sighthill saying **'there are no plans for demolition of Sighthill'** and that we should wait for the GHA's 'Housing Futures Assessment' and tenants' surveys to be completed. Sean Clerkin told Mr Maguire GHA that **HFA was and is in fact a demolition survey.** The original and updated business plans and minutes (cont'd PTO)


ST. VALENTINES DAY MASSACRE: DEMOLITION 'RUMOUR' TRUE!

February 14th saw no love coming from GHA to its tenants. GHA finally came clean about wanting to **demolish 21,075 flats of the 38,000 multies** they own as part of Glasgow's housing plan. By 2015, GHA and other housing associations will only build 3,000 homes between them with **GHA contributing NONE THIS YEAR; and only 200-300 a year till 2008. That's a NET LOSS of 4,000 rented homes a year!**

Where will they put displaced tenants? Glasgow already has a 10,000+ waiting list. Reducing the housing stock by 21,075 will create more homelessness and put an end to any transfers. GHA called SOH 'scaremongers' for spreading 'rumours not facts' when we alleged that they wanted Sighthill's demolition. **They lied before. They'll lie again.** 

Tony Benn Backs Sighthill Campaign - Sighthill Save our homes campaign received a very welcome personal message of support from former Labour MP Tony Benn. In a phone call he gave the campaign his backing '100%' and said it was 'scandalous' that people were being moved from their homes according to 'market forces'. Perhaps our own Labour MPs & MEPs could take a leaf out of Mr Benn's book

of GHA Board meetings confirmed that demolition of at least 19,000 homes was their aim. Announcing that SOH would carry out its own survey because tenants didn't trust GHA; Elaine Ellis also exposed the GHA's terrible repairs record; its massive £120million under-spend and that many tenants had not been consulted.



MARCH 2005
Issue2

SIGHTHILL SURVEY RESULTS!

59% ARE AGAINST DEMOLITION
In favour 27% Don't Know 14%

86% FOR RETAINING HOUSING
10% Against 1 Don't Know 5%

84% WANT INVESTMENT IN SIGHTHILL 10% Against Don't Know 6%

76% WISH TO STAY IN SIGHTHILL
To leave 19% Don't Know 5%

84% TO KEEP CONCIERGES
Against 7% Don't Know 9%

51% HAVE NO CONFIDENCE IN GHA
22% Happy with GHA, 27% Don't Know

67% FEEL INADEQUATELY

COMPASS LACKS MAGNETISM

Compass/GHA still deny that HFA is a demolition assessment although the GHA Board minutes from last year show that LHO's were asked to identify stock for 'offloading' code for demolition or sale in time for GHA's presentation of its updated business plan in November. They admitted up to 24,000 demolitions to the Council's housing committee's November meeting. An advance on the 10.854 promised in the 2002 GHA Stock Transfer proposal document (see p19). Compass has only 70- paid up members in all of Sighthill, Drygate, Townhead and Glasgow Cross combined. We estimate that only a dozen or so Sighthill tenants have

WHAT GHA SPENT (04) COMPARED TO GCC(03)

Rent Income: £200m SURPLUS: £99M

(04)

Staff / Admin costs: £96m (GCC £44m 03)

Maintenance/Repairs:£44m (GCC £44m

03)

Q: Why have GHA spent double the City's admin bill ? With that money enough to fix every hi-

SCOTTISH LABOUR DELEGATES REJECT STOCK TRANSFER

Around 20 Scottish Labour delegates (including councillors) heard what a basket case GHA Stock Transfer has been. At a Conference fringe meeting March 5th in Dundee, Tony Cox of Defend Dundee Council Housing condemned Stock Transfer as an attack on public housing, local councils; and on jobs. Save Our Homes rep Graham Campbell; Glasgow UNISON

DESIGNS ON OUR HOMES?

By Elaine Ellis(Pinkston tenant)

Legendary Property Company (LPC-Living) a Manchester based company - set a trend 6 years ago when buying two ex-council high rise blocks on Merseyside for under £10,000 each. The blocks were subsequently modernised then rented for £75 per week per flat. LPC then bought two more blocks in nearby Everton. These remodelled flats were put on the market for between £49,950 and £250,000 and were quickly 'snapped up'. LPC went on to buy up, modernise and sell on at vast profits ex- council high flats in Blackley, Manchester. At our last public meeting both GHA's Bob Maguire and Paul Martin MSP stated that Sighthill's future was under review because there was "no call for high flats". I would suggest that perhaps they should speak to LPC..... Except that they already have! An SOH member spoke to LPC posing as an interested buyer was told that their representatives had indeed been in talks with the GHA and have even been up to Glasgow on a fact-finding mission!

Have the GHA been very open about this fact? The

the major factors to cause concern. Consider our proximity to town, our fantastic views across the city, the fact that we live in one of the greenest parts of the 'Dear green place', our public transport links and direct access to the M8 (not to mention our 24 hour supermarket!) and you begin to see why Sighthill would be ideal for a private developer. An article published in The Guardian newspaper on January 15th sang the praises of 'Today's Castle in the air: The Tower Block.' Stating that 'High rise living is now so popular in inner cities' (Are you listening Messrs Maguire and Martin?) Architect Ian Simpson involved in the 'regeneration' in Manchester who now owns an ex-council flat says 'They provide a confident environment, very much within a city, and once you get above the first six floors a whole new world opens up'. Warren Smith (LPC's company chairman) is quoted; ' The buildings were invariably well constructed because council houses were always built to a higher standard' He later says 'At first the blocks were very successful and well managed by maintenance teams, but then in the mid 70's councils cut back dramatically, the maintenance men went and the terminal decline began. All we've done is address these problems' Perhaps the GHA could do the decent thing and address the problems faced by its tenants, only, if it's not too cheeky, not by moving us out and selling our homes on at a tidy profit? 